

## **India's response to Covid-19 Public Health Crisis**

Covid-19 has imposed a drastic stress on the healthcare delivery system in India, on the viability of public and private healthcare systems and on health outcomes. It also has hugely impacted the economy, the agriculture and the manufacturing sector, travel, service and IT-related industries. Both formal and informal employment have been affected, and there has been great pressure both on the urban and the rural economies. It has called for major policy responses; for emergency administrative measures and has required the intervention of the courts. At this time of global crisis, India's strengths and weaknesses have both come to the fore. The crisis also gives us an opportunity to study the structure, governance, management and deliverables of our healthcare system in the context of this public health crisis. We also recognize that the impact of Covid-19 cannot be understood if it is seen solely as a public health crisis; its impact on the economy at large, on the industry and employment, on agriculture and on unorganized labour are integral part such a study. Most importantly, the impact of this pandemic needs to be evaluated on the sociology of India's cities and villages.

In this context, the Thakur Family Foundation is inviting proposals from both individuals and institutions with a grant to critically analyze and document our response to this pandemic. The deliverable from this grant is expected to be a collection of essays in the form of a book to be published by a reputed publisher. The essays are expected to rely significantly on data, and present evidence-based analysis to draw their conclusions.

We anticipate that this book will be published in late 2021, thereby allowing for the collation and analysis of data relating to the topics we have listed in this document from the year 2019 & 2020. It is also likely that our understanding of the issues identified for discussion listed in this document may well change between now and the time the actual writing of the chapters.

We anticipate a master editor [which could be the individual herself in the case of individual applicants, or a person designated by the institution in the case of institutional applicants] for the proposed book, along with, if necessary, sub-editors for each focus area who can work with individual contributors responsible for the essays within that focus area. We recognize that the focus areas V, VI and VII will call for a different set of skills from the others; individual applicants will have to validate their qualifications for undertaking this effort. Institutional applicants will likewise need to show evidence of the range of skills needed to do justice to the topics listed. The outline below suggests examples of relevant issues in the current context and is not comprehensive. These will be finalized in consultation with the recipient of the grant.

We also anticipate an introductory essay written by someone of eminence in the area of public policy once the remainder of the essays are completed.

The outline below identifies the focus areas to be addressed and is not necessarily comprehensive.

**I. Pandemic Epidemiology**

What is the epidemiology of Covid-19? How different is it in India compared to the global context? Does it vary among and within the states? If so, how?

**II. Impact on national health programs**

Health consequences of the pandemic, specifically on non-COVID illnesses, such as tuberculosis and HIV, and noncommunicable diseases such as mental illness, diabetes and cancer.

Issues related to women's health, access to family planning and abortion services, children's nutrition programs, immunization, ICDS, schooling, mid-day meals, etc. The role of frontline health workers, doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, ASHA and Anganwadi workers.

**III. Pandemic Response**

Differences between states, impact of varied strategies adopted at different times during the pandemic, communication, access to care in public and private facilities, availability of testing, equipment, therapeutics, vaccine research, etc. How did the responses evolve over time? What kind of data/inputs were used by states to tailor their response?

**IV. Role and effectiveness of institutions**

How effective were the institutions responsible for healthcare delivery during this pandemic? These will include the Department of Health & Family Welfare, the Department of Health Research, ICMR and its affiliated institutions, NCDC, the Niti Ayog, the CDSCO and programs such as the IDSP.

**V. Legal & Policy issues**

What legal issues were adjudicated by the courts during the pandemic? What specific policies were used to respond to the pandemic. Of specific focus are the Epidemics Act, the Disaster Management Act and the Essential Commodities Act.

VI. **The economy, manufacturing, agriculture, the service sector, labour markets**

Impact on the economy, short-term and long-term. Impact on key sectors which were adversely affected by the public health crisis. How did these manifest among the people of the country?

VII. **Governance and administrative responses**

How did the central and respective states' administration respond to the pandemic. Was there a difference among the states? What lessons can we draw from this episode that are relevant to us going forward?

**Grant Size:**

The grant size for projects of this nature are typically in the range of USD 15,000 which should ideally cover a report and a conference. The grant size can be increased if the applicant makes out a strong case for doing so.

**Application Process:**

The application process has two stages.

**Stage 1** is the submission of a proposal to the Foundation by either an individual or an institution. This should not be more than two pages and should outline the subjects to be discussed in each of the seven focus areas, with, if possible, suggestions on who potential contributors could be. It should also include a resume or bio (no more than two pages, single spaced that includes a list of most recent published work) in case of individual applicants, and an Annual Report or similar document, preferably in digital form, for institutional applicants. Applicants must complete their applications for grants only on the prescribed form, which becomes available once applicants register on the Foundation's website. **This should be submitted, only via the Foundation's website through the Grants page, by September 15, 2020.**

A jury of seasoned professionals drawn from public health and journalism, will review the applications and prepare a shortlist. Details of the members of the jury and their respective background are available on our website. Shortlisted applicants will be informed of the jury's decision by **October 1, 2020.**

**Stage 2** is the submission by the shortlisted applicants of a detailed proposal further developing the proposal submitted in Stage 1, and including budget estimates and positive identification of contributors in as many of the identified subjects as possible. **This should be submitted, only via the Foundation’s website through the Grants page, by November 1, 2020.**

### **Notification of the Award**

The Foundation, based on the decision and recommendation of the jury, will notify the successful applicant/recipient of the grant by **15 November 2020.**

Once selected, grant recipients may be invited to attend an orientation/briefing to understand and familiarize themselves with the requirements of this assignment, and may also be asked to refine their proposals should the jury consider it appropriate. The Foundation would require a completed manuscript by **30 June 2021.**

### **Legal & Contractual:**

The selected awardees shall execute a contract between themselves and the Foundation for this assignment.

Grant making policies governing these investigative grants for Public Health are available for review on the Foundation’s website (<https://www.thakur-foundation.org/grant-making-policies.php>).

### **About the Foundation:**

Thakur Family Foundation is a Corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of Connecticut, United States of America. One of its core activities is encouraging scholarship and promoting activities defined as scientific and educational within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986, more specifically focusing on the promotion of Public Health. More information about the Foundation’s activities is available on our website: <https://www.thakur-foundation.org>